

Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips Monday, September 11, 2006

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107 prospective jurors ruled out for mom's trial in 7-year-old's killing

By JACK KRESNAK
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

September 11, 2006

Most of the prospective jurors in the murder trial of Lisa Holland, who is accused in the July 2005 death of her 7-year-old son Ricky, were excused from the jury pool today.

Some 185 potential jurors out of 226 summoned to the courthouse showed up Monday morning. Each filled out four-page questionnaires about their knowledge of the case and possible prejudices against Lisa Holland. Of those, 107 were excused for cause after their questionnaires indicated they held strong opinions about the Holland case.

“It’s a little surprising to see the number of people who have been impacted by this case,” said Andrew Abood, one of two attorneys defending the 33-year-old Holland in a trial before Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Paula Manderfield in Lansing.

“I think we’re going to have to work really hard to get a fair and impartial jury,” Abood said.

This afternoon, prosecutors, defense attorneys and the judge were questioning the 78 remaining in the jury pool, trying to seat a 12-member jury panel and four alternates. Another 40 prospective jurors who had been called for another trial in Mason were ordered to go to the circuit court in Lansing after the Mason trial was resolved.

Holland is charged with felony murder and first-degree child abuse in Ricky’s death. Her 37-year-old husband, Tim Holland, pleaded guilty last week to second-degree murder and is expected to testify against his wife. Her trial is expected to last four to six weeks.

If convicted of felony murder, Lisa Holland faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole. Her husband’s sentencing will occur after her trial; he also could receive up to life in prison, but would be eligible for parole.

Police and prosecutors are not sure exactly how Ricky died. Tim Holland said last week that Ricky was repeatedly abused by his mother and that Lisa Holland told him after Ricky died that she had struck the boy in the head with a small metal tack hammer.

The Hollands were foster parents in Jackson County when that county's Department of Human Services office placed Ricky with them after Ricky's biological mother voluntarily placed him in state custody because she had neither a job nor a home.

After Ricky's mother's and father's parental rights were terminated by a judge in Jackson in 2003, the Hollands adopted the boy and then continued to adopt four of Ricky's biological siblings as the state removed those children from the mother's custody.

The Hollands, who moved to a home near Williamston in May 2005, reported to police and to the news media in July 2005 that he had run away. In fact, according to police and Tim Holland's statements, the couple were covering up his killing and had disposed of his body in a swampy area south of Dansville.

Tim Holland led police to Ricky's skeletal remains on Jan. 27 after a fight with his wife.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com

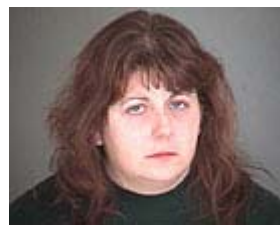
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Jury selection for Ricky Holland's adopted mom begins Monday

Susan Vela, Lansing State Journal

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Lisa Holland

In July 2005, a 7-year-old Williamston boy was reported missing.

A family drama hinging on an intelligent and energetic child then shattered into many shocking fragments: desperate searches for Ricky Holland; Ricky's bagged remains discovered in rural Ingham County; and his adoptive parents, Tim and Lisa Holland, being charged with his murder.

Now, one of the most high-profile trials to unfold in Ingham County starts Monday, and the preparation has been monumental.

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In his 18 years leading Ingham County's main law enforcement agency, Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth doubts he's ever seen his deputies work so hard, in terms of hours, on a case.

They gave up vacations, worked holidays and accrued stressful overtime to help prosecutors build evidence against the Hollands.

More than a dozen deputies could testify in the trial beginning at 9 a.m. Monday in Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield's Lansing courtroom.

"We're ready," Wriggelsworth said. "I'm fairly confident we're going to have a conviction."

Possible life sentence

During the four- to six-week trial, Lisa Holland must contend with testimony suggesting she was most responsible for Ricky's death.

Her attorneys must ward off first-degree murder and child abuse charges, which carry the possibility of life in prison without parole if Holland is convicted. Her husband, Tim, escaped a trial by pleading guilty Tuesday to second-degree murder. He will testify against his wife. His sentencing is set for Nov. 1.

Since May, the county court system has been preparing for this final test before 12 jurors and four alternates.

A total of 226 potential jurors are expected at the courthouse Monday morning.

Court administrators have asked former news anchor Cheryl Fritze to coordinate the media, which she agreed to do on a volunteer basis. She has been talking routinely to Lansing, Grand Rapids and Detroit media.

"I understand what the media needs, and I also understand what the court needs in this situation," said Fritze, who coordinated the media for a high-profile 1995 manslaughter trial.

Special needs

The Board of Commissioners' judiciary committee is permitting \$30,000 for the Holland trial's special court needs.

At least \$9,000 was committed to build a portable jury box and to set up a room where the media can watch and listen to the trial via monitors. Construction of the jury box began after Manderfield ruled in May that the Hollands would stand trial at the same time. Twelve jurors and four alternates would have been empaneled for each defendant.

Although the jury box no longer is needed, the construction was finished and the box could be used for other trials in the future.

Linda Maloney, Ingham County's chief assistant prosecutor, acknowledged the resources and notoriety attached to Ricky's case.

However, "at the same time the Lisa Holland case will be going on, there probably will be at least one other child death case being litigated," Maloney said. "The main concern is a fair trial. We are charged, as a part of our duties as prosecutors, to do everything we can to (ensure) that takes place. That is always foremost in our mind."

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com.

Web Editor: [Joshua Aldredge](#), Producer

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Published September 10, 2006

Holland trial caps months of work

Jury selection for Ricky's mom begins Monday

By Susan Vela
Lansing State Journal

Lisa Holland trial

- Jury selection begins Monday in the trial of Lisa Holland, who is charged with murder and child abuse in the death of her 7-year-old adopted son Ricky. The boy's adoptive father, Tim Holland, will testify against her. He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder Tuesday.

In July 2005, a 7-year-old Williamston boy was reported missing.

A family drama hinging on an intelligent and energetic child then shattered into many shocking fragments: desperate searches for Ricky Holland; Ricky's bagged remains discovered in rural Ingham County; and his adoptive parents, Tim and Lisa Holland, being charged with his murder.

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Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com.

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After Ricky: Will little boy's death spur state to comprehensive action?

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Published September 10, 2006

Ricky Holland's death should spur fundamental reform in Michigan's protection of children.

And, like it or not lawmakers, such reform means finding the money to provide the people and resources to properly oversee and assist foster families and families in trouble.

Ricky's tragic story touches on state policy on a number of levels. But at its core, it is a matter of will: Is Michigan willing to expend resources to defend its children?

Ricky entered the family of Tim and Lisa Holland as a foster child after Ricky's birth mother walked away from him. As came out in hearings during the prosecution of the Hollands, Ricky gave plenty of signs that his new home might not be a safe one.

Yet, the Hollands were able to adopt Ricky, in no small part because his birth parents were found by a court to not be the best place for him. He would later die in the Hollands' home.

Earlier this year, the state Department of Human Services - the lead child protection agency - was touting a new policy to reduce the number of foster placements. The goal is to put children removed from their homes into the care of relatives.

Changing placement policies could provide benefits, particularly if it eases pressure on Michigan's limited number of foster families. But such changes are no substitute for effective oversight. Blood relations are no guarantee against abusive situations.

This summer, the Legislature and Gov. Jennifer Granholm were able to agree on funding for 51 new Child Protection Services staffers. The Michigan League of Human Services reports the 2007 budget

also calls for five new staffers to investigate "high-risk" cases of abuse and neglect.

That is long overdue. DHS Director Marianne Udow told the Associated Press last winter that confirmed cases of abuse and the number of children abused had risen in Michigan between 2000 and 2005.

Michigan needs more people, with smaller caseloads, checking complaints of abuse.

Progress on other fronts isn't nearly as impressive, though.

A move is afoot in the Legislature to transfer the state's Children's Ombudsman's Office from the executive branch to the Legislature, under the theory that the office would appear more independent of DHS if it was in legislative hands.

What's that going to achieve, beyond provide legislators the appearance of action?

Of far more import was the announcement last week of \$547,000 in grants issued by the Children's Trust Fund to foster prevention measures. Among the 16 recipients statewide was the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Lansing. The group gets \$35,000 to boost mentoring of at-risk families.

A half a million dollars, though? The Children's Trust Fund isn't the only nonprofit aid program around, but surely Michigan - government and private sector alike - can do far more on abuse prevention than that?

And if not, what exactly do we tell our children?



Death of baby fuels court date

Sunday, September 10, 2006

By Steven Hepker

shepker@citpat.com -- 768-4923

A call that reached child-welfare officials reported Lee Hampton II appeared green and dying in July 2005. The 5-month-old Jackson baby died a month later without medical care or intervention by social workers.

More than a year later, the Department of Human Services is seeking custody, or temporary jurisdiction, of Lee and Melinda Hampton's remaining three children.

At issue is whether the baby could have survived with proper medical care, or at least suffered less in his final days. A bench trial on the custody matter, scheduled Monday in Jackson County Probate Court, was postponed last week to Oct. 30 so defense attorney Susan Dehncke can seek expert witnesses.

Lee II died Aug. 27, 2005. A team of doctors said liver disease caused him to bloat to the point of suffocation.

Jackson police called the baby's death "suspicious" and launched an investigation. They turned over their findings to prosecutors. Department of Human Service officials conducted a separate investigation; it filed its petition with Probate Court, July 3.

"He died a natural death but he suffered miserably," Jackson County Assistant Prosecutor Allison Bates said.

Prosecutors are still investigating; they said the complexity of the matter and a scarcity of qualified expert witnesses have slowed their decision on whether to file criminal charges.

"It is an unusual, very difficult case that takes a lot of expert analysis," Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mark Blumer said. "We have heard there are religious arguments."

The autopsy, cited in the court petition filed by DHS, details what appeared to be a slow, painful affliction revealed as cirrhosis of the liver with various complications.

The baby had 2,700 cc, about 3 quarts, of "yellow fluid" in his abdominal cavity, the autopsy determined.

"There would have been alarming symptoms, such as Lee II being very jaundiced, meaning his skin, eyes and gums would have been yellow then turning green," a child-protection team from DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids who examined the medical records concluded.

The team said the baby's belly also would have been distended and his breathing increasingly labored, according to the petition.

"DeVos advised they felt a reasonable person would have known from the appearance of Lee II that he required medical attention and care," the court petition states.

Reached by telephone last week, Melinda Hampton said the couple and their attorney would not discuss the matter. Friday, Lee Hampton, director of multicultural relations at Jackson Community College, said he was not ready to comment.

The Hamptons, members of the Church of God, apparently relied on faith to heal their son.

"We advocate divine healing," Lee's father, the Rev. Frank Hampton, said. He is pastor of the Church of God, one of Jackson's largest black churches.

The church, 140 W. South St., is fundamentalist. It opposes kissing among unmarried couples and advocates modest dress and behavior.

"Trust God for your survival and your support," Frank Hampton said of his family's Christian faith. "Our religion is our life."

Whether faith will be an issue before Probate Judge Susan Vandercook is unclear. Assistant Prosecutor Susan Beebe, who represents the state agency in Vandercook's court, said religion is not a defense for medical neglect of a child.

Court documents make no mention of religion, and Frank Hampton said faith did not kill his grandson.

"He died of a rare liver disease, one in 10,000, and there was no cure," he said.

The court petition shows Dr. Katikineni Rao diagnosed a hernia projecting from the baby's belly button at his two-month checkup on June 7, 2005. Rao said he referred Lee II for surgery, but Melinda Hampton refused the referral. Two weeks later, she made an appointment for the baby for "yellow eyes," a common sign of liver disease, but she never appeared for the appointment. Nor did Dr. Rao see the child again.

About that time, a caller informed Children's Protective Services that baby Lee "was green and looked like he was going to die." On July 20, 2005, an agency investigator went to the Hamptons' home in Jackson; Lee Sr. told the investigator the baby was sleeping and he did not want to wake him or uncover him.

The worker reported Hampton agreed to bring the baby to the agency for examination, but he never showed. Nor did the agency push the matter by seeking a court order in the five weeks between the home visit and the baby's death.

On Aug. 27, Lee II was brought to Foote Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

It is unclear from the court petition who brought Lee II to the hospital.

Dr. Mark Sochor, the emergency room doctor on duty at the time, asked the Hamptons about the baby's condition, the petition states. "Mr. and Mrs. Hampton advised Lee II's belly had been getting bigger over the past several days to a week.

"The Hamptons did not seek medical care for the condition as they thought it would get better," the petition states.

Many questions remain: Why the state agency dropped the matter without checking the child's medical condition, or why the agency did not immediately attempt to seize the other Hampton children after Lee II's death was labeled suspicious by police.

"In any death of a child, it is mandatory for the Department of Human Services to petition to terminate parental rights," Beebe said. "This is an unusual parental custody case."

Normally, the petition is filed very quickly and Children's Protective Services immediately removes children in the home, she said.

Department of Human Services officials declined comment, saying it is against policy to discuss cases.

In the court petition, the agency seeks to sever parental rights to three children, ages 6, 4 and 4 months, or at least force genetic testing of the youngest child. The older two are Melinda's from a previous marriage.

"It is undetermined at this time as to whether the cirrhosis is a genetic condition which would jeopardize the welfare of children born to Mr. & Mrs. Hampton in the future," the petition states.

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September 9, 2006

Wayne County

Bills aim to crack down on child abuse

Study by Cox that ties adult domestic violence, exploitation of children spurs state proposals.

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

Wayne County children who live in homes rocked by adult domestic violence stand a greater chance being abused themselves, according to recent studies by state Attorney General Mike Cox.

Cox used results from the studies to help shape a package of bills unveiled Thursday in Lansing that would tighten up the reporting, prevention and monitoring of child abuse by law enforcement and state Children's Protective Services workers.

"There's an awfully strong connection," Cox said. "It's a very thin line where someone commits domestic violence and then they will commit child abuse. They're just very abusive people."

Cox studied court records from the past eight years of families who appeared at Wayne County Juvenile Court following the deaths of 58 children suspected of abuse or neglect.

He found that 58 percent of the families had histories that included complaints of domestic violence or stalking or the filings of personal protection orders.

Cox also looked at 1,760 new abuse and neglect cases opened in Wayne County between Jan. 1, 2005 and March 16. He found that 27 percent of harmed children came from homes with known domestic violence histories.

The Wayne County findings reflect national trends, according to Cox. A 2003 study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, concluded that 30 percent to 60 percent of families experiencing domestic violence had both child and adult victims.

The package of bills announced Thursday by members of the House Special Committee on Child Protection would require police officers to file a report with state Children's Protective Services whenever they handle a domestic violence complaint, and CPS workers would be required to investigate.

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or kbouffard@detnews.com.

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Ex-prosecutor's child porn case may wait until spring

Illinois footing the bill for prison stay

PUBLISHED: September 11, 2006

By Chad Halcom
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A former Macomb County assistant prosecutor serving prison time in Illinois for attempting to arrange sex with a fictional child may wait there a while before he answers to Michigan authorities for his alleged crimes against real children.

Officials in Michigan and Illinois confirmed recently that Steven Michael Waclawski has been named for an extradition or interstate transfer request at Big Muddy River Correctional Center in Ina, Ill. But officials in both states also said they might do well to wait until next spring before transferring him here, because of a prisoner transfer costs and a possible quirk in Illinois law.

Waclawski, 50, who is about six months along into a 2-year prison sentence for attempted aggravated sexual abuse and solicitation of a child, has his earliest parole release date in Illinois in March 2007, officials and records indicate. And waiting until then might serve Michigan officials better, said Dee Dee Short of the Illinois Department of Corrections.

"In response to (Michigan's request) we're in the process of sending paperwork for Michigan to fill out under the interstate agreement on detainers," Short said. "But I'm being told the transfer might wait until his early release date because any time he spends in Michigan won't count toward his sentence here."

Waclawski is awaiting an arraignment in St. Clair Shores on 11 criminal charges including three counts of first-degree criminal

sexual conduct, a life felony, for incidents at his residence as uncovered by a computer search.

In March, an investigation by the Illinois attorney general's Internet Crimes Against Children task force netted Waclawski flying to Chicago and then driving to nearby Wheaton in an alleged attempt to meet with a child he had encountered on the Internet, who turned out to be an undercover police officer.

That arrest led to a subsequent search of his Shores home, uncovering evidence to suggest he had molested real children here.

Waiting on the transfer or timing it around Waclawski's release date might be a workable solution, said Michigan State Police Inspector Ellis Stafford. The supervisor of the regional Special Investigations Division handling that case said it could save money on prisoner transfers and long-term incarceration.

A raid on Waclawski's home near the St. Clair Shores City Golf Course and a search of his work station at his Birmingham law office led police to evidence unrelated to his Illinois arrest.

The home computer contained hundreds of images of male child pornography including roughly three dozen pictures apparently taken by Waclawski himself, officials said. Michigan State Police officers have since identified three children all somewhere between the ages of 10 and 15, though in local court records released in May their names were withheld.

Rusty Hills, a spokesman for Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, said this week that Illinois has now received two written requests to begin proceedings on transferring custody of Waclawski. "We followed up with another inquiry in late August, and we're still waiting on the response from them," Hills said.

Waclawski worked as a trial attorney under former Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga from 1986 to 1990, according to local records.

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http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/091106/loc_porn001.shtml



— THE — ANN ARBOR NEWS

Ozone House provides support, safe haven for high-risk youth

Sunday, September 10, 2006

BY MARJORIE KAUTH-KARJALA

News Staff Reporter

Q. Can you briefly describe the Ozone House program?

A. Ozone House has a lot of different programs all aimed at working with runaway and homeless youth and other high-risk youth - to really help them transition into a healthy adulthood. We have crisis intervention and counseling programs, in which we work with youth and families. We have a lot of different housing programs, from emergency shelter to transitional housing to really permanent supportive housing. We have a youth drop-in center, which is located in downtown Ypsilanti. That's more of a youth development and recreationally focused type of center where young people can come and hang out, work with supportive adults but not necessarily be engaged in counseling services. ... Most of the counseling happens in the community. It's mostly home-based work. We'll go to where the clients are.

Q. When you say high-risk youth, what do you mean?

A. I think that adolescence is really, by its nature, even in the best of circumstances, a really tumultuous time. We work with a broad range of young people, those who are homeless - actually on the streets. Those who are running from profound abuse and neglect to those who are struggling with really sort of (normal) issues of adolescence. Maybe it's a blended family, ... or they're having difficulties in school. The intervention is similar. You give kids a trusting person, you give kids a safe place, a voice. It just depends on what kind of external resources they need. ...

Our importance in the community is that we are a safety net for so many kids that don't have families who are supportive. ... (Parents) are not available, they're incarcerated, they're substance abusers. They have partners who are abusive.

Q. Some kids won't accept help from their parents. Why do they accept help from you?

A. Ozone House has always been identified by youth. More than half of our referrals come from other youth. This is the place where youth say, 'They're going to listen to you,' and I think that is part of our strength. We already have import and credibility that their parents don't have. ... People associate Ozone House with this loosey-goosey place. (They say) We're so lenient. It's true. ... Kids and parents are often shocked by how laid back we are, how informal we are. But they are also shocked by how much we know about young people and about families. One of the things we know that we really try to stress is the importance of setting limits for young people. We all want structure. We all want limits, even if we don't want them.

Q. Recently, several youth organizations held a program called Noise Permit for youth at Frog Island in Depot Town in Ypsilanti. These included Ozone House and some new organizations. What is the role of these new organizations and what was the goal of the program?

A. The groups besides Ozone House were Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act, Washtenaw Area Teens for Tomorrow and Teen Center Without Walls. They are relatively new groups. They are looking at a broader spectrum (than Ozone House). It's less about shelter, more about being empowered to do creative things in

your school, or have input into your county commission meeting. ... What we have in common is we are really focused on the Ypsilanti area. Everyone knows Ypsilanti is strapped. It really is an under-served area (for youth.) We're just trying to bring expertise and resources to the eastern end of the county that has existed in the Ann Arbor area.

Q. What needs of youth are not being met?

A. The needs that aren't being met for youth are the same needs that aren't being met in terms of families and adults. You know, poverty is on the rise, unemployment, underemployment is on the rise. Lack of health care is on the rise. All these things trickle down to impact youth and children. ... Sure there aren't a lot of safe places in the community to go and hang out and get supportive adults ... But I really just think it's hard for me to separate what's missing for youth in the community from (what's happening with the economy). ... If you have a neighborhood where young people have parents who are around, who are not working two or three jobs, who are making healthy choices, who are positive role models - (the kids) have less of a need. They're not going to be out on the streets getting in trouble.

Q. What can the community do to help area teens?

A. Parents, teachers, adults, grandparents can take an interest in their children and their children's friends and should not be afraid to raise concerns with other parents. Call Ozone House. Call child protective services. People can take more ownership in the community's youth, not just their own youth. We can listen to young people. We can try to empathize, try to remember what it was like to be in the midst of the confusing years of life, try to gain some additional compassion for those who have to deal with adolescence on top of poverty, violence, abuse.

Give your time, your money (to Ozone House or other youth organizations.) We have a wish list on our Web site at www.ozonehouse.org.

Q. What can parents and other concerned adults do when they see a young person struggling emotionally?

A. They can try talking with the young person. Pointing out they're noticing there's a difficulty. Talk with teachers. Point out that they're seeing a mood change or a troublesome behavior. We get tons of calls from parents who are just worried, who need a sounding board. We are always available to take those sorts of calls. Teachers and counselors, we're all trying to do the right thing for kids. Talk to your son or daughter, talk with your friends. There are experts throughout the community in schools, and certainly at Ozone House ... who are all interested in making sure kids are healthy, safe and doing OK.

Marjorie Kauth-Karjala can be reached at mkarjala@annarbornews.com or at 734-482-2961.

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Published September 9, 2006

Worker admits taking funds

Youth partnership leader misused \$40,000-\$70,000

By Tricia Bobeda
Lansing State Journal

GRAND RAPIDS - The former director of a Lansing youth program faces up to five years in prison after pleading guilty Friday to charges of making false statements.

Fawn Jones, who led the Neighborhood Youth and Parent Prevention Partnership, misappropriated between \$40,000 and \$70,000 from the program.

Her trial on those charges and a charge of wire fraud had been scheduled to start next week in federal court.

Jones told the court she misused Department of Justice grant money, Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy VerHey said in a news release.

Jones admitted she used the money to buy plane tickets for her children and to take pay advances that she never repaid. She lied in reports about how the money was spent.

The partnership had received about \$350,000 a year from city, state and federal governments and the Lansing School District.

Mick Grewal, the Lansing-based attorney representing Jones, did not respond to messages seeking comment Friday.

The partnership sponsored an annual teen conference on dealing with peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, self-esteem and teen pregnancy.

The youth program closed in September 2003 amid the allegations of funding misuse.

Juanita Mitchell of Lansing, a former administrative assistant with the partnership, pleaded guilty last year to embezzling at least \$30,000 from the organization.

What's next

- Fawn Jones admitted misusing \$40,000 to \$70,000 from the Neighborhood Youth and Parent Prevention Partnership.
- The youth program, now defunct, had received about \$350,000 a year in city, state and federal funds.
- Jones is scheduled to be sentenced at 8:30 a.m. Dec. 7. The maximum penalty is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

She was sentenced to 30 days in prison and was ordered to pay back \$30,576.

Councilwoman Sandy Allen, who was on the program's board, said she was glad the situation has come to a close.

"This was extremely unfortunate," Allen said. "A lot of trust was involved."

Allen said earlier this year that the city now requests audits of all boards to which it contributes money, and requires annual reports from organizations on how the money is spent.

Allen said there was no foreseeable future for the partnership in Lansing.

"It would be difficult under these circumstances to get grants and continue the program as it was before," she said.

Contact Tricia Bobeda at 377-1061 or tbobeda@lsj.com.

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Study finds weaknesses in child mental health care

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT

FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

September 11, 2006

U.S. children and teens who face behavior and mental health problems often have a hard time finding programs and specialists, a new study says. In Michigan, the problem may be worse than in other states because insurance coverage is more limited, experts say.

As a result, too many kids get drugs, not therapy, even though therapy initially may be best, says the study, which was released Sunday by the American Psychological Association.

In Michigan, gaps in care are particularly serious for uninsured families or those with more serious problems, according to interviews with half a dozen leaders of children's mental health services. Michigan is one of about a dozen states that do not require mental health benefits to be covered as fully as many medical problems.

"It is an enormous problem locally and nationally, and Michigan probably is one of the hardest hit," says Dr. David Rosenberg, chief of child psychiatry and psychology at Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit. "What's tragic here" is that "the system is dominated by who pays the bills and how much they pay."

Although metro Detroit has many programs that provide counseling to children and families, too many offer garden-variety therapy, not precisely targeted approaches shown to work better, says Dr. Sheila Marcus, section director of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical Center.

By the time children are referred to U-M, many have seen several counselors or been misdiagnosed or given the wrong medicines or doses, she says. An example is children

Signs of problems in children

- Profound sleep difficulties.
- Decline in school grades.
- Appetite and weight changes or complete loss of appetite.
- Feelings of guilt. Children with problems may blame themselves severely.
- Poor organizational skills. Children may be poorly focused on tasks.
- Refusal to go out. Hermit-like behavior.

diagnosed with bipolar illness when "they really don't have that," she says. "There's a tremendous use and misuse of that label, or inappropriate or under-dosing of medicine."

Medicaid coverage even varies by county, and coverage in that and other plans may be limited to a certain number of visits a year, she says.

For less serious problems, resources in metro Detroit are good, says Elizabeth Boyce Kelly, chief development officer for Easter Seals-Michigan, which oversees mental health services for children for the Oakland County Mental Health Authority.

Part of the problem is that parents don't know how to find what's available, she and others say. New hot lines, such as the 211 human services line in the tri-county area, help, as do Web resources.

In Macomb County, Family Youth Interventions, a nonprofit agency that provides free mental health care to children and families, will soon begin a new street outreach program for a youth drop-in center. The agency provides free outpatient counseling for three months for children and teens, as well as a 15-day program that houses children ages 10-18 and provides counseling and life skills tips.

"We're kind of the best-kept secret in Macomb County," says the agency's Jolyne Baarck.

Contact **PATRICIA ANSTETT** at 313-222-5021 or anstett@freepress.com.

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Talk to your child's doctor if you spot any of these signs and ask him or her or your child's school counselor for help or referrals. Also, see the list on Page 1C of places to go.

If necessary, get a comprehensive assessment of your child.

"The best predictor of a good response to treatment is making an accurate diagnosis," says Dr. David Rosenberg, chief of child psychiatry and psychology at Children's Hospital of Michigan, Detroit.

PATRICIA
ANSTETT

Published September 9, 2006
[From the Lansing State Journal]

Local news briefs

Highfields names new president

ONONDAGA - Highfields Inc. on Friday named John Evans, a division director for the Michigan Department of Human Services, as its new president and CEO.

Evans, a Williamston resident, was selected by the agency's board of directors to oversee its 17 programs for families and youth in 11 counties.

Highfields came under fire earlier this year after reports surfaced of staff mistreating three youth in the residential treatment program for boys with behavioral problems.

The agency suspended its Youth Opportunity Program in February, but reopened in July after making several changes. Those include replacing its residential director, some staff and dismissing President and Chief Executive Officer Jim Hines.

Evans will take over the position Oct. 1. He has 25 years of experience in juvenile treatment and services, including 15 years with the state.

Evans is currently division director for the DHS Community Programming & Support Services Child Care Fund Unit.



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Published September 9, 2006

New law threatens welfare funding

State must get thousands back to work quickly

By Kevin Freking
Associated Press

Back to work

Top three states with estimated number of recipients who need to go back to work:

- California: 60,417
- Pennsylvania: 22,570
- Michigan: 11,415

Source: U.S. Health and Human Services Department's Administration for Children and Families.

WASHINGTON - The welfare rolls aren't dropping as fast as they used to, and that could pose a big money problem for states from coast to coast after a new federal law takes effect next month.

The states' task: find jobs for tens of thousands of people on welfare or risk losing millions in federal money. More than two dozen states have work to do, including Michigan.

The law requires states to place into job training, community service or other work activities 50 percent of their households that get welfare aid - and 90 percent of two-parent households that receive assistance.

"About half the states are in pretty good shape," said Wade Horn, assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services. "About a quarter of the states are really going to have to work hard."

Pennsylvania will have to add nearly 23,000 recipients to the work rolls, which amounts to a 220 percent increase in work participation, according to federal estimates obtained by The Associated Press.

Michigan must add nearly 11,500, a 117 percent increase.

Several other large states, including Texas, Florida and Georgia, will meet the requirements easily, according to the federal estimates.

The requirements are part of broad rules that more strictly define what constitutes work and require states to verify that adults are doing the activities the states say they are.

This week, five Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee said the rules had placed new challenges on the states that would make the program more expensive and difficult to administer. They are asking for a congressional hearing.

Some analysts also are concerned that states will penalize beneficiaries as a way to get to 50 percent work participation, rather than help recipients land and keep jobs.

"The people who have the most barriers to employment, the most issues in their life, they tend to be sanctioned more than others," said Evelyn Ganzglass of the Center for Law and Social Policy. "But they often have problems that prevent them from complying. These can be mental health problems, physical disabilities, all kinds of issues that these families face."

Pennsylvania officials say their state has made significant strides since March, the last month included in the federal figures. Work participation is now up to about 32 percent instead of the 15 percent cited by the federal government.

"We're confident we're going to hit the number," said Ted Dallas, executive deputy secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

The new regulations have forced Pennsylvania to re-evaluate its program, he said. There has been more one-on-one counseling and more accountability from contractors, and more recipients have been penalized when they did not comply with state requirements.

States can kick recipients out of the program if they have not met certain requirements, such as attending appointments with counselors or going to job interviews.

Horn stresses that states do not have to be at 50 percent work participation come Oct. 1, just at that average over the course of the year. Then, states will have a chance to take corrective action. The earliest that penalties could begin is 2009.

Those penalties could be severe. States face a reduction of their welfare block grant of up to 5 percent the first year they fail to meet the new threshold, and 2 percentage points for each additional year.

Pennsylvania, for example, gets \$719 million. If it fails to meet the work requirement, it could lose as much as \$36 million in federal funds in 2009.

One important feature of the 50 percent threshold is that states get extra credit when they reduce the number of welfare recipients. If a state's caseload drops by 5 percent from 2005 levels, then the work participation requirement also will drop by 5 percent.

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September 9, 2006

Law aims to get many off welfare

Michigan among states that risk losing federal cash if they don't find jobs for more recipients.

Kevin Freking / Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- The welfare rolls aren't dropping as fast as they used to, and that could pose a big money problem for states from coast to coast after a new federal law takes effect next month.

The states' task: find jobs for tens of thousands of people on welfare or risk losing millions in federal money. More than two dozen states have work to do, including Michigan, Pennsylvania and California.

The law requires states to place into job training, community service or other work activities 50 percent of their households that get welfare aid -- and 90 percent of two-parent households that receive assistance.

"About half the states are in pretty good shape," said Wade Horn, assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services. "About a quarter of the states are really going to have to work hard."

Pennsylvania will have to add nearly 23,000 recipients to the work rolls, which amounts to a 220 percent increase in work participation, according to federal estimates obtained by The Associated Press.

California has to find work activities for more than 60,000 people -- a 100 percent increase in its work participation rate. Michigan must add nearly 7,000, a 117 percent increase, state officials say.

Marianne Udow, director of Michigan Department of Human Services, predicts Michigan will meet the federal requirements of 50 percent of its welfare recipients being engaged in work-related activities. If it doesn't, it faces penalties beginning in 2009.

"We are very confident we are going to meet the goals," said Udow. "We have talked to HHS, and during the next fiscal year we expect to meet the 50 percent (requirement)."

For fiscal year 2007, the state will receive \$775.4 million in a welfare block grant. Currently, 78,000 single- and two-parent families in the state are receiving welfare. Participation in work-related activities include employment, on-the-job training, vocational educational training (such as truck-driving school) and community service.

The state now stands at 23 percent of its single parents on welfare meeting the work participation requirements.

Udow said steps already taken will boost that figure to 34 percent by Oct. 1, when the new law takes effect.

Several other large states, including Texas, Florida and Georgia, will meet the requirements easily, according to the federal estimates.

The requirements are part of rules that more strictly define what constitutes work and require states to verify that adults are doing the activities the states say they are.

This week, five Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee said the rules had placed new challenges on the states that would make the program more expensive and difficult to administer. They are asking for a congressional hearing.

Some analysts also are concerned that states will penalize beneficiaries as a way to get to 50 percent work participation, rather than help recipients land and keep jobs.

Detroit News Staff Writer Deb Price contributed to this report.

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Published September 10, 2006

Cristo Rey losing service program

Deadbeat moms help neighbors with odd jobs

By Christine Rook
Lansing State Journal

To help

- The Cristo Rey Community Center on North High Street is looking for volunteers to do yard work for people who are elderly or have disabilities.

About 60 households in the Cristo Rey neighborhood are in need. For information, call 372-4700.

At the end of the month, 80-year-old Ardyth Seltz likely will have to start mowing her own lawn and raking the leaves, and when winter comes, shoveling snow.

The program upon which she relied will disappear Sept. 30 because \$74,840 in state and county funding will evaporate.

"I'm on a walker," said Seltz, who has undergone three knee surgeries and four back operations. "I can't rake leaves. I can't shovel snow. I can't do anything."

The program let mothers who were delinquent in paying child support perform community service instead of going to jail. Cristo Rey sent an average of five of these women to neighborhood homes to do odd jobs.

Seltz is among dozens of affected residents in Lansing's North High Street area. The program served about 40 homes; 20 more were on a waiting list.

Now, the mothers will complete their court-ordered community service either at Ingham County parks or with Delhi Township.

The change is a boon for the parks department, which gains more workers. Parks officials already manage court-ordered community service for about 20 delinquent dads per day. There is room for the women, officials said.

"It's not that these people won't have a place to perform their community service," said Mary Sabaj, community corrections manager for Ingham County and Lansing. "They will."

Community service is a money saver for taxpayers. That is because the alternative is jail time, and it costs \$49.16 per day to house someone at the Ingham County jail.

The Cristo Rey program was cut because it had the potential to work with about 20 women, and only an average of five were involved each day, said Russ Marlan, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Corrections.

The state paid \$53,000 in 2005-06 and planned to pay \$43,000 in 2006-07. The money goes for administering the program and monitoring the participants.

"This isn't anything against Cristo Rey," Marlan said, "but we're not going to continue to fund something that's at a 23 percent utilization rate."

Ingham County, meanwhile, decided that rather than pick up an increased share of the program cost, it would spend nothing and allow delinquent moms to work alongside delinquent dads through the county parks department.

Cristo Rey did offer an additional service in that it helped state probation officers monitor the activity of the inmates in the Cristo Rey program.

Marlan, however, said that because probation officers manage at least 60 inmates and monitor activities for all of them, picking up duties for the Cristo Rey participants would be easy.

"At this moment, I don't have an alternative," Cristo Rey's Executive Director John Roy Castillo said about the loss of the program.

One solution, he said, is to recruit volunteers.

Seltz figures she'll have to pay someone, but it will be difficult on her monthly Social Security check of \$807.

"You feel funny asking people to do something when you don't have a lot of money to pay for it," she said. "I'm lucky if I can come up with \$5."

Contact Christine Rook at 377-1261 or clrook@lsj.com.

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Kinship Care conference helps grandparents raising kids

By Kelly Fosness

DMG Writer

CALUMET — After early morning hugs and kisses goodbye, Nancy Robillard drops her five-year-old grandson Austin off at daycare before heading into the office. And like every weekday, the Calumet resident returns in the afternoon to pick him up and take him home. It's a routine she's been doing since Austin was six months old.

Nancy and John Robillard are among a growing number of grandparents and relative caregivers across the country who are raising children separated from their parents for one reason or another. Most of the time this nurturing and protection, defined as kinship care, is provided when the original families are torn apart by substance abuse, incarceration, death, mental and physical illness, child abuse and neglect, among other crises. For the grandparents, the full-time care can be challenging as they are often older, may be facing financial constraints and have already shared in the parenting experience.

Like the mother of three grown boys said of her experience, "this is my second time parenting, and it's not easy."

Citing the challenge of scheduling daycare, doctors appointments and balancing her own routine, Nancy added, "The hardest part is that I'm older and I don't feel as though I have the patience I would have if I were younger. My husband however, is a very big help. It really helps to have someone who's willing to take it on with you."

Becoming a legal guardian to her first and only grandchild, however, wasn't a tough decision to make. In the months following his birth on Feb. 5, she spent several weekends with Austin, developing a relationship right from the start. It was a bond she couldn't turn over to a foster home.

"He had a connection with me right from the beginning," she said. "After this many years I could never give him up. He brings so much joy to my life."

On Sept. 22, the Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress is inviting the public to attend the first statewide Upper Peninsula Kinship Care Conference at the Holiday Inn in Marquette. Kinship Care program coordinator Ama Agyemang, of the Kinship Care Resource Center at Michigan State University, said the conference is designed to educate and inform the public about kinship care and let caregivers know that there are many resources available to them.

"Often times they feel very isolated because there aren't a lot of programs at the state and local level," Agyemang said. "We're trying to bring them together with professionals and get the awareness of kinship care out there."

The conference begins with registration at 9:30 a.m. followed by keynote presenter Anne King, who has spent the past 30 years working with families in crisis as a school counselor, teacher and principal. She will be discussing the topic of children and the five predictable life cycles, which repeat during teen years, as well as offer an uplifting look at "normal" development of children.

Agyemang said other topics to assist kinship care families include: legal options for child custody, community resources, support group development, mental health issues and parenting skills.

"It can be challenging for many grandparents raising children because often times they lack the financial assistance. Many of them are on a fixed income," Agyemang added. "There are many unexpected factors ... and they need an outlet for themselves."

Marja Salani, aging specialist for Copper Country Mental Health Institute, one of many collaborative agencies of the conference, said the primary benefit for the children remaining with the grandparents is that they aren't put in an unfamiliar environment.

"That's the big thing. They're not with a stranger," she said. "A lot of times with grandparents, they've been over to their house off and on visiting so they've already developed a relationship with them. That wouldn't have happened in a foster care situation."

A grandmother of five, Salani said one of the things she loves about being a grandmother is being able to enjoy her grandchildren.

"We want to have those fun times with our grandchildren, not have to be the disciplinarians, which when grandparents do take over as the parents, they have to be and that can be challenging for them to adjust to," she said.

"We want grandparents to know that they aren't alone and that there are resources out there to help them."

The U.P. Kinship Care Conference is open to relatives raising other relatives' children, social service professionals interested in learning about resources for kinship families, students and the general public.

Those who are interested in attending must fill out a registration form, which are available at Copper Country Mental Health Institute in Houghton. Free childcare will be provided during the conference, however space is limited. To register a child, call 906-226-4182. For more information about the conference, call 1-800-535-1218 or email kinship@msu.edu.

Kelly Fosness can be reached at kfosness@mininggazette.com



Special family gets special house

Saturday, September 09, 2006

By Kyla King

The Grand Rapids Press

CASCADE TOWNSHIP -- Tears spilled down Marge Jones' face as she clutched her daughter, Bonnie, and struggled to find words to describe how she felt after first seeing the new, fully furnished home volunteers built for them.

Jones said she found it hard to believe the striking blue and white home was being handed over to her mortgage-free.

"You open up the cupboards and doors and everything is supplied," she said while struggling to catch her breath. "There's three 50-piece sets of silverware. We were down to four forks in the other house. It's overwhelming."

The home was built and given to her by friends who hatched a plan to replace the dilapidated 126-year-old gray farmhouse in Cascade Township where Jones, her roommate and helper Cheryl Johnson, and nine adopted and two foster children lived.

Over the past 30 years, Jones has taken in more than 75 special-needs foster children and adopted 21 others through the round-the-clock ministry she and Johnson ran out of her home.

Because Johnson has no income, Jones receives only a small salary and benefits, and adoption and foster care payments cover just half the family's financial needs, they rely on donations from family and fellow Calvary Church members to get by.

The building project was born eight months ago when Alisa Wilde brought dinner to the farmhouse and later told her husband, Todd, about its poor condition and condemned garage. Initially, there were plans to rebuild just the garage until Todd saw the home had holes in the foundation and walls, sloping floors and cramped rooms.

Jones admits the farmhouse was not suitable for her family but said they made due and never complained.

"I loved my old house, but it really had a lot of faults. It was falling apart," she said.

Soon after seeing the home, Wilde talked to his partner, Ryan Forsma, and they joined with builders Scott Tubergen and Darren Herweyer in leading a rebuilding effort.

"We just felt like the Lord was telling us they don't need a new garage, they need a new house," said Herweyer's wife, Jill, who also got involved.

The group set up a foundation to funnel donations and raised \$180,000 toward the building project. The 4,800-square-foot, nine-bedroom, five-bath home was built at a fraction of its worth. More than 200 businesses that donated supplies such as drywall, granite countertops, appliances and furniture, Wilde

said.

On Friday, Jones' family saw the home for the first time during a private early-morning visit before a public open house that attracted more than 200 people. Volunteers planned to move the family in by day's end.

The fully decorated home features dark wood cabinets and woodwork, stainless steel appliances, an elevator, handicap-accessible bathrooms and custom-designed bedrooms for the children. The spacious kitchen has a table large enough to seat the whole family.

Because of her children's special needs, each room was equipped with a camera linked to a system that allows Jones or Johnson to monitor the children from screens in the kitchen and their bedrooms.

As he watched Jones and her children hug each other and cry tears of joy, Wilde said it made the effort worth it.

"(Marge) said thank you is not enough, but it is," Wilde said.

Send e-mail to the author: kking@grpress.com

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Published September 10, 2006

Man wants law to recognize rights of birth fathers

Child's adoption occurred despite his desire to raise him

By Lisa Roose-Church
Special to the State Journal

SHELBY TWP. - Christopher Sorgani discovered his former girlfriend had given his newborn son up for adoption despite his continual requests to raise the boy.

"I was infuriated," the former Brighton man said. "I didn't know what to do. I couldn't believe ... she just went away and gave away a child, my child. How could she do that, knowing I want kids?"

The 22-year-old, who now lives in Macomb County's Shelby Township, hired a lawyer and tried to fight the adoption, but according to Michigan law, he was considered a "do-nothing parent" because he had not provided financial support to the baby or the mother, and he had not established a parental relationship with the child.

Rights terminated

Sorgani said the woman refused his support and deceived him about the pregnancy.

As a do-nothing parent, his parental rights could be involuntarily terminated, according to Michigan law.

Sorgani now plans to fight the law, and his Howell-based attorney, Lyle Dickson, has asked state senators and representatives for legislation to protect fathers from losing their parental rights for failing to pay support when the birth mothers deceive them about a pregnancy.

"The current status of this law is unfair, unjust and victimizes a legitimate parent who is defrauded and emotionally abused by the birth mother," Dickson said.

While courts recognize a woman's right to make a decision about becoming a mother, they remain unsympathetic to a man who even gives an appearance of not supporting the woman pregnant with his child, said Jeanne Hannah, a family lawyer from Traverse City who has spent 15 years advocating fathers' rights.

'Presumed' father

Michigan refers to birth fathers whose legal status is not established by marriage, court order or an affidavit of paternity as "putative father" or the "presumed" father.

Michigan law protects a putative father's rights if he has established a custodial relationship with the child or has provided "substantial and regular support or care" for the mother during pregnancy or for either the mother or child after the child's birth.

Sorgani's ex-girlfriend admitted in a June court hearing that she lied to him and intentionally deceived him, Dickson said.

"He was deceived about pretty much everything, and she would not accept his offers of assistance," Dickson said. "There is absolutely no current law to protect deceived putative fathers."

Sorgani said he knows any change in state law will be too late for him. The best he can do, he said, is wait until his son turns 18 and hope that the boy knows he is adopted and comes looking for his biological father. "What else can I do?" he said.

Contact Lisa Roose-Church of the Livingston County Daily Press & Argus at 552-2846 or lrchurch@gannett.com.

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NEWS IN A MINUTE: Macomb County

September 10, 2006

MT. CLEMENS: Study to help group head off domestic violence

The Macomb County Domestic Violence Council will host an open forum Friday to discuss its Fatality Review Report.

The report is a study of several cases of domestic violence that led to death or near-fatal injuries. The council -- a nonprofit group that seeks to help domestic violence victims -- is seeking ways to avoid similar situations. The report found that fatal domestic situations were not random acts and can be prevented.

The forum will be at the Mt. Clemens Library, 150 Cass Ave., beginning at 3 p.m. It is open to the public.

For more information, call Carmen Wargel at 586-463-4430.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet - (517) 373-7394

DHS announces Proud Fathers-Proud Parents grants in 19 counties

Sept. 11, 2006

The Michigan Department of Human Services announces up to \$980,000 in grants to 12 community-based organizations for Proud Fathers-Proud Parents services in 19 counties. Proud Fathers-Proud Parents are community support programs that have a shared objective of improving outcomes for Michigan children.

Through this initiative, DHS provides funds for community agencies to deliver specific responsible male parenting services and other services designed to promote healthy marriages and co-parenting efforts. Each grantee can receive up to \$70,000 annually in actual cost reimbursement. The grants are part of a three-year cycle that will be renewed in October, pending state funding provided in the Department of Human Services budget.

"Whether parents live together or apart, they are connected by their care and concern for their children," said Michigan Department of Human Services director Marianne Udow. "These programs strive to improve the communication and problem-solving skills of parents to improve outcomes for their children."

The Proud Father-Proud Parent grantees are as follows:

Agency	Counties	Contact Person
Bay/Arenac ISD 4155 Monitor Road Bay City, MI 48706	Bay Arenac	Amy Muempfer 989-667-3275 muempfera@baisd.net
CAN Council of Saginaw County, 1311 N. Michigan Ave. Saginaw, MI 48602	Saginaw	Delores Gale 989-752-7226 dgale@cancouncil.org
Capital Area Community Services 101 E. Willow Street Lansing, MI 48906	Clinton Ingham Eaton Shiawassee	Julie Kepler/ Jeff Keener 517-482-1504 julie.kepler@cacsheadstart.org
Child and Family Services of the Upper Peninsula, Inc. 706 Chippewa Square Marquette, MI 49855	Marquette	Tanya Savage 906-228-4050 ext. 115 tanyasavage@miuplink.com
Community Action Agency 1214 Greenwood Ave. Jackson, MI 49203	Jackson Hillsdale	Shelley Hawver/Bob Pletcher 517-784-4800 ext. 235 Shawver@caajlh.org
El Shaddai Counseling & Consultation Services 105 E. Front, #204 Monroe, MI 48161	Monroe	Victoria Brown 734-240-0372 el_shaddaicc@hotmail.com

Genesee ISD 2413 West Maple Ave. Flint, MI 48507	Genesee	Catrina Wiskur 810-591-6159 cwiskur@geneseeisd.org
Lula Belle Stewart Center, Inc. 1534 Webb Avenue Detroit, MI 48206	Wayne	Kathleen Walters 313-867-2372 ext. 206 waltersk@lulabellestewart.org
Spectrum Human Services, Inc. 28303 Joy Road Westland, MI 48185	Wayne	Roberta Price rprice@spectrumhuman.org 248-552-8020 ext. 280
Spectrum Human Services, Inc. 28303 Joy Road Westland, MI 48185	Oakland	Pam Jaymes 734-367-6793 pjaymes@spectrumhuman.org
Teaching Family Homes 1000 Silver Creek Rd. Marquette, MI 49855	Delta Menominee	Steve Rudness / Jerry Migda 906-249-5437 steve.rudness@teachingfamilyhomes.com
Teaching Family Homes 1000 Silver Creek Rd. Marquette, MI 49855	Chippewa Luce	Jim Whalen / Jerry Migda 800-292-5257 james.whelen@teachingfamilyhomes.com
United Methodist Community House 904 Sheldon SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507	Kent	Alvin Gray 616-452-3226 ext. 3004 AGray@umchousegr.org
Salvation Army Teen Parent Center 1215 East Fulton Grand Rapids MI 49503	Kent	Tenitia Pulliam 616-459-9468 ext. 278 Tenitia_Pulliam@usc.salvationarmy.org

The Proud Fathers program is a 14-week group-based program for fathers or other male caretakers of children and the Proud Parents program is a 10-week group-based program designed for married or unmarried couples. Both programs stress the importance of nurturing relationships between parents and children as well as family self-sufficiency.

Grantees will provide Proud Father services to adolescent and adult fathers, stepfathers or other male caretakers of TANF-eligible children. Grantees will provide Proud Parents services to adolescents and adult parents or couples of children that are TANF-eligible. Participating parents may be custodial or noncustodial and may be expecting to parent.

Eligible Proud Father participants must be: 14 years of age or older; a parent of a child under age 18 unless the child is 18 and attending school full-time; or expecting to parent.

Eligible Proud Parent participants must be: 14 years of age or older; a parent of a child under age 18 unless the child is 18 and attending school full-time; married, unmarried or contemplating marriage.

For further program information please contact one of the above listed agencies or Duane Wilson at 517-241-7050 or wilsond6@michigan.gov

For more information on Department of Human Services go to www.michigan.gov/dhs